



Early Learning Programs & Workforce Committee
(High Quality Programs and Professionals)
Julie Johnson, Chair

January 22, 2019
6 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Appoquinmink Training Center
Room 138
118 South Sixth Street, Odessa

MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order

- Call to Order at 6:07pm

Introductions

- Julie Johnson / Cassie Martina / Dawn Alexander / Cindy Gibbs / Lynn Jezyk / Melanie Thomasine / John Fisher-Klein / Linda Freeman / Kiley Herron / Christina Koutsourades / Peggy Stinson / Belvie Herbert / Debbie Taylor / Myra Holmes / Jackie Bense / Andrea Prettyman / Corinne Dries

Approval of Minutes

- Meeting minutes will include PowerPoint slides from last meeting
- Minutes approved

DHSS Presentation: Allowable Fees charged to POC families

- Topic has come up for a couple of years regarding private-paying families' policies versus Purchase of Care participating families. Recommendations will be created into a proposal to be sent to DHHS
- Belvie Herbert (CCDF administrator) and Linda Freeman, provider relations gave presentation
 - Introduction of Jacqueline Bense, policy administrator (interpretation of child care policies)
- Discussion of allowable fees for Purchase of Care families
 - Reason why these fees are in place:
 - ACF administers the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDF) child care policy is derived from this law. Three allowable charges:
 - 1. Late pick-up fee, only if parent has exceed their authorized hours.
 - 2. Return check-fee
 - 3. Field trip fees

- DHHS goal is to ensure parents are able to access quality child care. The set charges are derived from the CCDF law. Desire to achieve equal access to families. Nation-wide conversations are happening on this topic. It is up to the state discretion on what additional fees providers can have. Also, documentation has to be done and the information needs to be available to the federal government. Subsidized child care has to still be accessible to all Purchase of Care participating families.
- Desire to receive feedback and feedback will be viewed by DHHS leadership and be discussed. Open to the feedback about the additional fees.
- Julie Johnson:
 - Access to quality child care absolutely, yet fees that we are discussing are not about adding on additional costs to families, but due to policies. E.g. if families pay mortgage late then it's a late fee. It's a behavior / accountability for families. If families do not pay late, then no fee. Also, late pick-up fees. If families exceed hours of attendance – providers incur overtime costs to have individuals stay for families to pick-up past operating hours. E.g. waiting 45 minutes to an hour waiting for a family, providers take on that cost. However if never late, then never charged a fee.
 - Also, for every credit card processed the provider is charged (e.g. credit card convenience fee). There is no guideline that family must pay with credit card, they can pay with cash / check / etc. Provider is not stating that they must use credit card.
 - Also, key fobs currently in Tender Loving Kare is a deposit (e.g. in the case the family walks away with key)
 - Another fee is free-and-reduced lunch – we are not able to charge reduced lunch rate for a family – provider is expected to cover that cost. Issue is taking up costs out of pocket.
 - Lastly, security deposit for co-payment. Security deposit is for when parents have to give 1-week notice of leave. Security deposit gets applied back to families (e.g. pays last week co-payment).
 - Registration fees: Varies from state to state.
 - None of these fees are being proposed from coming from the state. These fees are coming from the families' behavior.

Questions & Answers

- What do we do when we have before and after-care – solution of excluding is not allowing people access?
 - Not excluding, but having that conversation with families regarding whether or not place is best place for families.
- Concern about child leaving program.
 - But that is not the only program for the child. If you cannot accommodate that parents' hours then your program is not the best suited program for the family. As long as parent is aware of hours, then provider has the rules. Remember that all providers of Purchase of Care have signed a Purchase of Care contract.
- Not charging families late fees, but incurring out of pocket.
 - Today is to have a discussion
- Appreciation for coming out today. Situation of two day cares in worst areas of the city and high percentage of Purchase of Care. Issue of what receiving Purchase of Care and private paid families – being hit very hard. 10 years no raise, yet every year costs increase. It's a hard place right now, especially low-income children. Really concerned about serving the population in the Red. If it

weren't for the STARS check – without it, centers like ours would not exist. It would cost another person to charge the fees. Importance of consequences of behavior. We care about these kids. Already being hit hard – concerned about this policy. Not only mentoring staff but mentoring parents. There has to be a consequence.

- Unfortunately – it is DHHS' standpoint that they understand the need for consequences. Are these parents out late for 2 hours due to just being hanging out / issues catching buses. Are we having conversations, as a trauma-informed state, it is not my belief that parents are hanging out. Are majority of parents hanging out?
- For selective parents, this new policy may change the behavior.
- Children are paying the consequences of the parent actions. Looking at the bottom line of the child.
- Desire not to sound petty, we are not talking about the parents that are 10 minutes late. In intake, we know which parents are running late due to break-downs. We are talking about the habitual. E.g. families that took too much time running errands. If there is no consequence besides asking the parent to leave, that's not what we are about. We want to keep child there every day. Those are the parents we are talking about.
 - Place in proposal.
- Shouldn't be child care center who should be paying for e.g. broken down car or running late. It seems that it's only fair that parents have some kind of fee. Parents know when they are supposed to pick up their child. Not good to put child in middle of situation – either parents know XYZ time to pick up child or there's a fee involved and they pay it. Child should not have to move child out of center.
- Question: do you charge a late fee and they don't pay it? Then, what?
 - Suggestion of a three-strike system. Talking about parents who did not let center know of their lateness – all emergency cards have who can pick up child. Right now, we have nothing. Unless we put it in our own policy and then we are removing children from our centers. Could there be a standard of a three-strike-system?
 - Can place that idea in proposal.
- Right now, families are hoping from center to center because they are picking up children late. Most centers are about the same time. There needs to be something for centers to keep children in their centers.
 - Process for a policy change.
 - DHHS would create policy change. Would propose it at the writing meeting. Would go through entire DHHS so entire agency can view and provide feedback. Then APA process – legal process for revising policy. Paperwork to fill out / discussion of financial impact of revision / spell out revision / out for public comment (30 days to provide comments and feedback). Then response to comments. When goes through APA process that would be a regulation.
- Is it currently regulation, not being able to charge specific fees?
 - It is not a regulatory process. We have to develop a new policy. Right now it's not.
- Is there anything for families to lose Purchase of Care if
 - Contact a child care monitor – programs typically do this when parents are not following through with POC rules and regulations.
- How many families lose POC?
 - Not many. Belvie does not know of one.
- Issue of family then jumping to next center.

- We have providers that are not following the rules and it is just as hard to terminate their contracts. We want to keep providers here but we want to make sure families have what they need.
- Financial Impact Summary
 - Fees that parents will be charged. None.
- Financial Impact on the program?
 - We are talking about the financial impact to the State of Delaware.
- 10 hour authorization – we cannot charge families because still within 10 hours span.
 - Hours of attendance is required in child information card.
 - That's a problem.
 - It does happen. Stayed at center until 9pm at night – only option is to call authorities. Still a problem that can't charge a late fee.
 - Other proposal for a time-frame fee.
- When families ask for POC, they are required to have an orientation for enrollment for POC – is there another way of doing that? Outlying system that would better define the rules for using the subsidy. Maybe there's a miscommunication issue with orientation.
 - When they talk to the case workers. However, no PowerPoint.
 - Eligibility worker will go through what they must abide by – including providers' rules and regulations.
 - DHHS is in the midst of trying to really connect to their parents. Thought of attending parent meetings that are already happening.
- A lot of changes to co-payment. No cost of care – no longer allowed. We need to make it more cost effective for families that are eligible. Also, lowered entry level for families (poverty income levels lowered from 200% to 185%). Depending on what level they fall, will determine co-payment.

March / April full implementation.

 - POC rates
 - Secretary's Office at next Council Meeting on the 30th.
 - It is in governor's budget into this upcoming fiscal year. Yet, has to go through its own whole process.
- Registration fees that we should not be charging but sometimes families are paying fee while in the process of getting POC approved. Most of our families who are in the 200% poverty level do not have the money to be paying registration fees. One family had paid out \$1000 within first week of going to work. Clarity: if provider is told they may not have POC but they are registering and will have POC. What is rule for providers?
 - There is no rule. It is between provider and family. It is an ethical question.
- 626 Form?
 - Only if family should be using 626 when can't be entered in the system.
- One provider checks if it is pending – then uses that as a determinate.
- Timeline:
 - Group recommendations about types of fees in proposal (e.g. key fobs might not be applicable to every provider).
 - Free-reduced-lunch: Potential future conversation with Amy. DHHS received clarification from her but not able to articulate it right now. (OEL can assist)
- Deposit fee
 - Can range from \$10 to \$25 for parent fee
 - Based on amount of copay (DE has it per child)
 - Copayment will be changing to per family

- Registration fee – may not be something of success
 - Not very important to one participant
- April 1st send in proposal hopeful proposal submission
- Parent question regarding paying parent-fee when center is closed.
 - E.g. snow day / holiday
 - If it is a state of an emergency, then they cannot charge.
 - Parents should not be getting charged if center is closed.
 - Anything past the 6 POC Holidays then you cannot charge.
 - Discussion of Level 2 driving restriction. –Something that can be addressed in proposal.
- Julie will put together proposal and send out to feedback and then
- Reminder that Julie is looking for members for ad-hoc committee for next school year (possibly next spring around April) for early childhood expo. Attendance would be high school students. Spring will also be FCCLA conference – Rita good contact to have. Ideas from Culinary Arts expo. Goal is to plan an expo for early childhood education – most likely held at Del-Tech. Interest of vendors and donations from sponsors. Committee to help with the planning process – place check mark next to name in sign-in sheet.
- Reauthorization of CCDF – there was a recommendation for early learning programs implement developmental screening to ensure families of children least likely to have development screening. 30% of children in DE having screening. When asked for recommendations in the spring, DE chose not to follow recommendation. ACF has provided with pages. STARS Programs 4 and 5 must have ASQ screening. Have until Jan 31st to make recommendation for licensing regs. Child Development Watch / pediatricians aren't required to screen / lots of children being missed. Even if screening is done, not system to follow up. 50 cents for a screening. Former proposal to DHHS about pilot for screening. One option is to go through licensing. Not good enough for teachers to do paperwork and have nothing to be done about it. Perhaps a school district accountability issue. Colonial does online screening and process for centers. CDW is concentrating on physicians and next attempt is child care providers. There is a number of child care providers not allowing interventionists to come in. Follow up was conducted last week – Julie will continue to follow-up. Idea of two-fold from this committee and from licensing. Burden should be on school districts. Possible topic for next meeting.
- Next Meeting in April for this sub-committee

Meeting Adjourned

- 7:34pm meeting adjourned.